

Eligibility

Eligibility criteria

1. The additional 15 hours will be available from September 2016 to parents of three - and four-year-olds where both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns, on average:
 - a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW), and
 - less than £100,000 per year.
2. As set out above, a parent will need to be earning the equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum or living wage. At present, the living wage is £7.20 an hour. Therefore, the minimum income requirement for a parent (over the age of 25) is £115.20 a week. The minimum wage for 21- to 24-year-olds is £6.70 an hour – therefore, the minimum income requirement for this group is £107.20 a week.¹
3. A parent will be eligible if they expect (on average) to earn this amount over the coming three months. The eligibility criteria have been designed this way to accommodate parents with fluctuating incomes and those who are about to start working or increase their hours.
4. For example, a parent who is on a zero-hours contract will get work some weeks, but not others, and may not know in advance if they will have work in any given week. If, on average they work two weeks out of every three, and when they are working they get 25 hours of work at the minimum wage, their child will qualify for 30 hours of free childcare.
5. 'Parent' means a person who has parental responsibility for the child or care of the child. In cases where a parent has remarried or is living with a partner, the step-parent or partner must also meet the earnings threshold.

¹ Note that these rates are £5.30 for 18-21 year olds, £3.87 for under-18s and £3.30 for apprentices.

6. Foster carers **are** eligible for the extended entitlement if they meet the criteria set out above for **their own children**. Foster carers **are not** eligible for the extended entitlement for the **children that they foster**.

7. Working includes employed persons, self-employed persons and parents on zero hours contracts who meet the criteria.

8. Families where one parent does not work (or neither parent works) will not usually be eligible for the extended entitlement. However the extended entitlement will be available where:
 - Both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on parental, maternity or paternity leave
 - Both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on adoption leave
 - Both parents are employed but one or both parents is temporarily away from the workplace on statutory sick pay
 - One parent is employed and one parent has substantial caring responsibilities based on specific benefits received for caring
 - One parent is employed and one parent is disabled or incapacitated based on receipt of specific benefits

9. A **child** and parent must be **resident (living) in the Local Authority**, as evidenced by the parent's proof of residency.

The **person applying for the childcare** (usually the parent but could be their partner) is '**resident in the UK**'.